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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a review of the literature that included reports from the Inter-American Press Association's general assembly in Los Angeles in October 1984, the mid-year meeting of the Inter-American Press Association in Panama City in March 1985, and the 1983 world press freedom review of the International Press Institute. Other material is adapted from the Index on Censorship and the Committee to Protect Journalists Update No. 10 (January-February 1984). The paper examines the current status of freedom of the press and information in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the nations discussed are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherland Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Surinam, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The paper concludes by noting that the status of freedom of the press and of information is improving in the area, as is evident in (1) return of democracy in Argentina, (2) end of total censorship in Uruguay, and (3) maintenance of democracy in the three traditional democratic countries of Venezuela, Colombia, and Costa Rica. (HOD)

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AN UPDATE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND INFORMATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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AN UPDATE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND INFORMATION

IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Manuel Buendia walked from his office on May 30, 1984, in the Zona Rosa of Mexico City. Gunmen stepped out suddenly and pumped bullets into him. He died fighting a problem he had worked 40 years to solve in his country: corruption. Buendia, a popular columnist for the daily Excelsior, wrote a column called "Red Privada" (Private Network), which focused upon corruption in government and politics (1). On the same day Buendia was shot, several thousand miles to the south on the border of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, two reporters were killed in the bombing of a press conference of Nicaraguan rebel leader Eden Pastora. This time the dead journalists were Linda Frazier, 38, a reporter for San Jose's Tico Times, and Jorge Quiros, a reporter for Costa Rican television (2).

In still another case, Salvadoran journalist Rafael Hasbun, 56, was murdered in April as he walked toward his San Salvador office where he wrote his column for Diario de Hoy. Despite his popularity as a conservative, three men gunned him down. It was one more assassination in a war zone. There are thousands. Hasbun, a lawyer and journalist, reached thousands through his column. The gunmen silenced his opposition voice (3). Working in Latin America remains an extremely dangerous assignment for U.S. journalists as well. In March 1984, a Newsweek photographer was shot to death in an ambush in fighting between leftists rebels and government troops just northeast of San Salvador. A Time magazine photographer was luckier, he was not hit (4). Many other journalists, in numbers not yet tallied for the year, died in Latin America trying to do their jobs. At least nineteen journalists around the world were killed in 1983, ten more than the number which died in incidents of political violence in 1982. After looking at annual reports by worldwide organizations

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monitoring freedom of the press, Fram concluded, "Journalism is still dangerous, and freedom of the press continues to be limited in vast areas of the world . . ." (5).

It is apparent that when the news media in some Latin America and Caribbean region countries have felt pressure to support the prevailing ideology of the nation's government, and when they have resisted both political and social revolutions, violence and restrictions of freedom of the press and information increase. In developing countries where press freedom is at a transitional stage, political instability is a prevailing characteristic of the social system. When this exists, the power structure is compelled to exert strict control over the flow of ideas, and, especially, over the mass media system. Different types of control represent the various functional alternatives available to national governments to regulate and constrain the free operation of mass media outlets. This macroscopic approach to communication research has been inherent in the works of Tichenor, who in recent years has developed a structural model in which information control is seen as a mechanism of system maintenance (6). Habte notes these conformity pressures are both subtle and direct (7). In the world press freedom review, International Press Institute Director Peter Galliner said, "some of the worst places to be a reporter today are Central and Latin America. Overseas and domestic correspondents have faced danger daily from a variety of sources" (8).

Argentine editor Federico Massot has identified political violence as one of the main problems facing the press in Argentina today. "There has been a lot of it in the past 35 years and I don't see how it will disappear overnight. The first attacked are the journalists and papers." Another problem he identified is self-imposed censorship. While there has never been outright censorship in

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Argentina, except during the Peron era, the danger today lies in self-imposed restrictions on information flow because journalists have been intimidated by violence against them and their newspapers and the weakness of the economy in 1984 (9).

Costa Rican publisher and editor Manuel Jimenez agrees with Massot. "With the exception of Costa Rica, Honduras, and to a certain degree, Panama, Central America is an area where journalism has become a dangerous profession. In Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, many of our colleagues have been killed, kidnapped, or forced into exile. In general, we can no longer think of journalism as a profession that would bring about a special status . . . or provide a certain immunity. War and political turmoil do not honor credentials . . . " (10).

Freedom House estimates print media freedom as known in democratic states exists in only about one-third of the world's countries. While there are serious problems elsewhere, incidents of violence against Latin American and Caribbean journalists demand that concern for this region remain serious. Of the nineteen journalists killed by acts of violence in 1983, eight were killed in a single incident in Uchuraccay, Peru. While a government committee concluded the journalists were mistaken by villagers as a band of hostile terrorists, questions remain unanswered. Beyond this, the International Press Institute, Freedom House, the U.S. State Department, and the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) indicated at least four other journalists were kidnapped, ten threatened with death, eighty arrested, nineteen expelled from seventeen countries, and two dozen beaten or had their offices bombed in 1983 (11).

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Freedom House found media in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay operated under direct or indirect government pressures not to criticize the government. These limitations in opinion making are still common in Latin America. Only a few countries--- Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Venezuela are free to editorialize (12).

The Council of Hemispheric Affairs and the Newspaper Guild, which represents 32,000 newspaper workers of the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, concluded:

> "(I)n no other part of the world is a career in journalism more dangerous or psychologically debilitating (than in Latin America). In a number of Latin American countries it has become axiomatic that to report faithfully government-sanctioned atrocities is to invite similar treatment against conveyors of the information . . . .
>
> When journalists are disemboweled in San Salvador, 'disappeared' in Guatemala City, and murdered outside their offices in Buenos Aires, U.S. newspapers often make reference to the event. Recently, the . . . murders of eight journalists in Peru reached the front pages of the U.S. press" (13).

Obviously, concern for press freedom and freedom of access to public information in Latin America is not new. Alisky notes this topic has concerned scholars for several decades at least. He wrote: "Press freedom became one of the basic criteria for measuring degrees of democracy and dictatorship in the various Latin American nations in the continuing surveys . . . " (14). However, Alisky notes press freedom is a concept which has interested scholars, but a more difficult and illusive factor is freedom of information, or the freedom of reporters and editors to gather facts from official and unofficial sources for news stories as well as the ability of the news media to protect sources of information which must remain confidential. In this research paper, the authors make their evaluations of freedom of the press and information using the free system of the Western World as a base line. This approach is not without fault.

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For example, Nam recognizes this common approach to international analysis and wrote, quoting from E. Lloyd Sommerlad:

> The question, however, is whether Third World nations use the Western definition of freedom of the press or whether they have their own definitions. How is press freedom defined in the Third World? We have to remember that most Third World nations represent a "no man's land where social institutions are still being shaped, where democracy is in the balance and one-party states are developing, and where the relations between press and government are ill-defined. The press is caught up in an ideological whirlpool and there is little ground for optimism that the Western concept of a free press will survive" (15).

Former IAPA President German Ornes, publisher of El Caribe of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, said entering the 1980s many Latin American governments were using a language that was at best superficial and did not really give any substantial ground toward greater freedom of information (16).

Freedom of the press, freedom of information, and other aspects of the Latin American news media have been given only cursury attention in recent scholarly research in North America (17). This paper seeks to review the current status of freedom of the press and information in Latin America and the Caribbean. The literature reviewed includes final reports from the Inter American Press Association's 40th general assembly in Los Angeles in October 1984 and the mid-year meeting of IAPA in Panama City in March 1985 (18), the International Press Institute, the Index on Censorship, and the Committee to Protect Journalists (19).

CONCERN FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PRESS FREEDOM

Representatives of newspapers and individuals of the Inter American Press Association regularly pass resolutions relating to limitations to freedom of the press and information. These resolutions are concerned almost entirely with

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activities of Governments which are viewed by IAPA to abridge freedom of the press. As seen in Tables 1 and 2, these resolutions are concerned with taxes on newsprint, uses of official advertising, licensing of journalists, use of identification cards, UNESCO, Government harassment of opposition newspapers, Government damage to newspaper offices, Castro and Cuba, expulsion of journalists by Governments in Latin America, and closing of newspapers by Governments.

TABLES 1 AND 2 GO ABOUT HERE

STATUS OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND INFORMATION

The IAPA Committee on Freedom of Press and Information report was summarized by these conclusions released at the end of the Los Angeles meeting:

> Nineteen eighty-four was an Orwellian year for the press in the Americas. The year was appropriately Orwellian in the sense that the press found itself under increasing pressure from the all-powerful state.
>
> . . .
>
> While it is encouraging to note that the democratic winds of change are sweeping through the hemisphere and countries like Uruguay seek legitimization through elections now or in the future, they all continue to restrict press freedom, harass journalists and impose controls. In Cuba, Guyana, Suriname, Paraguay, and Haiti, there are, however, no signs of democratization.
>
> Press freedom is also threatened by political violence. Terrorism of the right, of the left, and of the state continues to claim the lives of journalists. In Central America, many journalists have been killed in the crossfire between warring bands, and have--- like the messengers of old--- been executed because they have not brought the news the powerful wish to hear, and have also 'disappeared' after being kidnapped by armed groups.
>
> Less dramatically, but equally worrying, the press throughout the hemisphere is being subjected to subtle pressures to deny the people their right to know. Even long standing and stable democracies are not exempt from the corrupting power of the state. Like democracy itself, the press in Latin America is a fragile plant. The political,

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social and economic power of even democratic governments sometimes threatens to crush the press underfoot (20).

The following nation-by-nation summaries are taken from reports presented at the 1984 IAPA Freedom of the Press and Information Committee meeting in Los Angeles, the 1985 mid-year meeting in Panama City (21), and the 1983 world press freedom review of the International Press Institute (22). Other material is adapted from the Index on Censorship (23) and the Committee to Protect Journalists' CPJ Update (24):

ARGENTINA--- Argentina returned to constitutional rule on December 10, 1983 when the Military Administration became a democracy with the election of President Raul Alfonsin, who ended the state of emergency. With this, a 'security' law (No. 20,840) and an article of the penal code (No. 212), used to gag the news media, were repealed. The main problem remains the thirty-eight percent tariff on newsprint, highest in the world. It is still in force. There are also high tariffs on contact screens, plates, mounting wax, and blankets. This restricts size of newspapers and leads to closings in some cases. For many economic reasons, newspapers in Argentina are suffering 'serious economic and financial problems which, as has occurred in many cases, have led to their definitive closure.' Furthermore, at its 1983 annual general assembly in Amsterdam, the IPI resolved to attack the deteriorating press situation in Argentina and urged the Government to repeal laws that restrict freedom of the press (25).

BOLIVIA--- Bolivian newspaper are suffering from financial problems caused by the economic difficulties of their country. Government regulations on foreign currency sales hinder newspaper operations by slowing payments. The economy has led a newspaper in Oruro to shut down. Another one may close in the near future in Potosi (26). IPI believes conditions have generally

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improved, nevertheless, since the re-establishment of democratic government in October 1982. "Today, there is no direct hinderance on the media," IPI says (27). Despite the improvement, the National Press Association declared itself on alert and vowed to safeguard the freedoms and security of its members. In one recent violent act against a newspaper, the morning newspaper El Diario of La Paz was stoned by agitators after a demonstration by students.

BRAZIL--- Brazil's new democracy, installed in March 1985, has led to positive changes for the news media. President Tancredo Neves has assured newspapers he would change press laws to democratize it, according to IAPA reports. Numerous instances of governmental pressures against the press have been documented prior to the new government taking power in Brazil. Three cases were highlighted by IAPA, including the defamation case of the political editor of Tribuna da Bahia, the assassination of journalist Maria Eugenio of Correio Braziliense in November 1984 (police are suspected), and the assassination of Paulo Brandao, manager of Correio de Paraiba (his killer is unknown). IPI, in an Amsterdam resolution, called for the Brazilian government to repeal laws that restrict press freedom.

CHILE--- Conditions have worsened in Chile in the past year. In November 1984, the Chilean government extended a state of seige. The decree permits the president to establish censorship of newspapers and other news media without legal recourse. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression ended with this decree in November 1984 and continues to be shackled. The government closed six magazines at that time--- Analisis, Apsi, Cauce, Fortin Mapocho, La Bicicleta, and Pluma y Pincel. It also placed the newsmagazine Hoy under prior censorship. The relevant provisions of the seige state: "While the state of seige is in effect, the country's newspapers, magazines, and publications in

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General and the radio and television stations will refrain from disseminating news, interviews, commentaries, declarations, insertions, reports, photographs, images and any other form of expression, regardless of their source, which allude to events that, directly or indirectly, could alarm the populace, disturb public order, or the normal development of national activities or deal with acts defined as terrorist in Law 18.314," according to the IAPA report.

COLOMBIA— In December 1984, the government imposed an eight percent tax on newsprint. This breaks the tradition of tax-free newsprint in this nation. The president of Colombia signed the law, breaking a 28-year period of duty free newsprint. President Belisario Betancur has said he would approve any amendment returning to duty free status, but this has not occurred to date. Journalist Luis Dummet was killed in the town of Sincelejo as he was investigating irregularities in some public enterprises. A public official was arrested and the case is now before the courts.

COSTA RICA— While there is considerable press freedom in Costa Rica, the newest restraints on the press drew attention to the country in 1984 and 1985. In March 1985, IAPA President Maximo Gainza formally asked the president of Costa Rica, Luis Alberto Monge, to consult the Inter American Court for Human Rights if the required membership in the Colegio de Periodistas represents a violation of the Inter American Human Rights Convention. In July 1984, the government-sanctioned Colegio de Periodistas placed advertisements in local news media announcing that any foreign journalists must have an appropriate ID issued by the Colegio before they can report from Costa Rica. The case of American journalist Stephen Schmidt drew a great deal of attention in 1984. Stories Schmidt wrote for La Nacion and The Tico Times in covering a 1980 IAPA

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mid-year meeting in San Jose led to his arrest. While one judge ruled Schmidt was exercising his rights, the Supreme Court later overturned the ruling and sentenced Schmidt to a suspended three months in prison (28). The case took almost three years to get through the courts. In another case, a judge ordered the Board of Directors of the Colegio de Periodistas (College of Journalists) to allow Gerardo Enrique Fonseca to become a member. In early 1985, La Nacion was freed of any responsibility in a slander complaint against it by the former treasury minister.

CUBA--- There is no freedom of the press in Cuba. The Cuban press is owned and managed by the government. Any printed material is closely monitored by the government censors. All programming is pretaped for television to avoid live situations. Even sports programs are delayed about ten minutes to permit interruption if needed. Foreign correspondents are frequently jailed and expelled if they stray from strict guidelines. Cuban journalists face dismissal if they do not honor the performance standards. Furthermore, IPI noted citizens found with foreign publications may be imprisoned for up to four years.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC--- The debate in the courts continues over the journalists' collegium, the restrictions on radio and television imposed by the government, and in placement of official advertising. The Dominican Newspaper Society continues during spring 1985 to fight Law 148 that established the Dominican Collegium of Journalists. They maintain it is unconstitutional. And in a public protest, the major stockholders of Listin Diario and its subsidiary, Ultima Hora, complained that government officials has harassed and threatened them because of editorial positions of the newspapers, according to IAPA reports (29).

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ECUADOR--- Membership in the collegium (association) is still required of all journalists. The government is placing newspapers which maintain an independent stand at an information access disadvantage. Such newspapers, like Diario Hoy, are entirely excluded from official information when it is distributed by the Government to the Ecuadoran newspapers. Official advertising has become a problem as well. The Government uses distribution of official advertising business as a pressure point as well, as it has discriminated against independent newspapers by placement of official advertising with newspapers supportive of the Government, IAPA Freedom of the Press and Information Committee members reported.

EL SALVADOR--- It is obvious the violence of the civil war has affected the work of the Salvadoran news media, such as the examples cited at the outset of this paper. Official advertising, like Ecuador, is a problem in early 1985 in El Salvador, IAPA members reported. El Diario de Hoy has protested this treatment. The Salvadoran Government also continues to require radio and television stations to run programs simultaneously, which they argue is economically damaging. Radio and television stations have also protested a bill presented by the National Administration of Telecommunications (ANTEL) which would raise the rates higher than at present--- which could lead the businesses to bankrupcy or greater dependence on Government subsidies.

GRENADA--- The situation has changed drastically in Grenada in the past year since the invasion by the United States and other Caribbean forces. Before October 1983, there was no freedom of the press. Since then, efforts have been made to establish a free Grenadan press. One of the first orders by the new Government after the invasion was to order release of Leslie Pierre, editor of The Grenadian Voice, who was jailed for three years. Also released

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was Alister Hughes, who left St. George's Prison on October 26, 1983, one day after the invasion. Hughes, who reports for several international news agencies and publishes The Grenadian Voice, had been arrested a week before. Lloyd Noel and Tillman Thomas, who are also with The Voice, were also freed, CPJ said.

GUATEMALA--- Significant changes mark developments in Guatemala. There has been no direct censorship and government pressure since August 1983 when Gen. Oscar Mejia Victores took over the government. The country is still ruled by the constitution of 1965, which guarantees freedom of thought. The ruling administration of Victores has been tolerant of the media but journalists maintain an attitude of limited self-censorship. Simon writes that "although there has been little direct violence against the media since the coup, local and foreign journalists are often intimidated" (30). Under former president Efrain Rios Montt (1982-83), journalists worked under stricter government supervision. Although an editor was kidnapped and disappeared in 1982, only one editor, Pedro Julio Garcia of Prensa Libre, was kidnapped since (in October 1983), but he was released about two weeks later.

GUYANA--- There is no freedom of the press in Guyana, although one newspaper, The Catholic Standard, is published with serious limitations. The government has kept tight control over the newspapers by nationalizing opposition newspapers, IPI reported. IAPA reported in March 1985 that there are several libel suits pending against The Standard and Father Morrison which remain unsettled at the beginning of April 1985.

HAITI--- There is still no freedom of the Haitian press. Grants of U.S. development funds are given to the Haitian government based on, among other things, on existence of a free press in Haiti. The most outspoken publication

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in the country. "Information" began in May 1984 and published for a short period of time. By June 18, 1984, however, the Government would no longer permit editor and publisher Pierre Robert Auguste, to produce the newspaper. The latest issue was seized on that date, as was the editor's personal library. The editor and staff were briefly detained but released the same day (31). Violence against Haitian editors is a problem even in the United States.

HONDURAS--- A leading threat against journalism in Honduras is existence of the Collegium of Journalists and its law that all journalists must belong to it to practice their craft. IPI believes Article 75 of the Political Constitution which allows prior censorship is the most serious threat to journalism in Honduras. IAPA reported in March 1985 that newspapers and other publications have been threatened by extremists groups. On December 24, 1984, a military unit attacked the newspaper La Prensa but there were no injuries. IAPA reported considerable damage, however.

JAMAICA--- The government's monopoly control over the electronic media has not changed. Print media remain free to publish without interference. The government refuses to allow further broadcast media development as well. The government will establish a 'media commission' to supervise activities of the government-owned media.

MEXICO--- There has been a tremor of violence against Mexican newspapers during summer 1984. Several attacks occurred in May and June. Manuel Buendia, a political writer for Excelsior, was shot to death in Mexico City, as described at the beginning of the paper, but the case was still not solved at the beginning of April 1985. Javier Juarez Vazquez was a second murder victim just hours later. A day later, Juarez was found in a ditch 600 miles southeast of Mexico City. He had been shot in the head. Motives of killers of Juarez,

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editor-in-chief and owner of a Veracruz weekly, are still not known (32). Police inefficiency contributes to a feeling of impunity which encourages such attacks, IAPA stated. Like other Latin American nations, economic pressures affect performance of the Mexican news media since there is great dependence on imported materials. Costs of some items went up as much as 600 percent. Newsprint prices have increased 264 percent from 1982 to 1983. Economic pressures have led to suspended publication status for numerous newspapers. the cost of a newspaper is high--- estimated at a half hour of work for the average Mexican employee (compared to five minutes for average Americans). Curtailment of accessibility severely compromises the independent press in Mexico. President Miguel de la Madrid's campaign against corruption, a program of moral renewal, has used the reports of the newspapers about corruption as evidence to further its work. In another problem area, there is a state monopoly on production and marketing of newsprint. IPI also noted the government controls decision-making power over much advertising and bank loans.

NETHERLAND ANTILLES--- New legislation has been introduced in 1984 which reduces restrictions on radio and television, IAPA reported.

NICARAGUA--- The leading opposition newspaper, La Prensa, continues to receive harassment from the government. It has been more than three years now (March 15, 1982) that prior censorship has been enforced by the Nicaraguan government. The rigidity of censorship has been uneven, though. Police confiscated 15,000 copies of the 75,000-copy daily newspaper because government censors apparently missed a front-page item in the newspaper which described student demonstrations against the military draft on August 29, 1984 (33). Censors had not eliminated the story during their daily review of

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content. La Prensa has great difficulty with government censors in reporting attacks on itself. The report noted: "It must be emphasized that La Prensa is being subjected to a brutal censorship campaign and that every phrase, every photograph and every advertisement which it publishes has been read and approved by the Media Bureau of the Sandinista military regime." Furthermore, La Prensa is having difficulty in obtaining financial support to import raw materials because the government will not permit La Prensa to borrow or buy dollars. Threats against staff are also a serious problem. Temporary closings continue due to censorship. The situation in Nicaragua has not changed over the past thirty-six months when prior censorship began and twenty independent radio stations were closed. Finally, in resolutions at Amsterdam, IPI expressed concern about the mass media situation in Nicaragua, urging it to cease its censorship and refrain from economic harassment (such as La Prensa). IPI also asked the government to do its utmost to assure the safety of journalists and other media personnel.

PANAMA--- "Although conditions for journalists have improved slightly, the situation is still far from perfect," IPI reported (34). IAPA said the government still attempts to limit and intimicate the independent media. In December 1984, police beat a photographer and reporter for La Prensa while they were covering a demonstration. Radio station La Voz del Baru in Chiriqui remains closed since June 1984 because the government says it lacks technical requirements.

PARAGUAY--- Paraguay's government has permanently closed ABC Color, the country's largest daily newspaper, despite a trip by IAPA Executive Committee members to Asuncion in June 1984 to meet with President Alfredo Stroessner. He closed the newspaper on March 22, 1984 after the March 16 jailing of Aldo

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Zuccolillo, owner and editor of the nation's leading newspaper. Zuccolillo was released March 24 and was under house arrest until March 30. ABC Color was closed because, the Government said, it was "a permanent effort to subvert the public order" (35). Zuccolillo had been jailed before. He had refused to reveal the name of a source and was arrested and jailed for eleven days in summer 1983. In March 1985, an ABC Color warehouse was searched by police and 1,200 copies of a pamphlet which discussed the closing of the newspaper was confiscated. As of April 1985, ABC Color remains closed. A result of the closing, IAPA said in March 1985, is the chill on the news media. Other media have ignored the most important political issues of the country, such as official corruption and political persecution, for fear of Government sanctions. In November 1984, the National Administration of Telecommunications (ANTELCO), informed Humberto Rubin he could not broadcast over his own radio station, Radio Nanduti. He was told to stop interviewing politicians not approved by the Government. He was threatened with closing if he did not follow orders. His appeal in court was refused in January 1985. He was warned again in March 1985 to stop such broadcasts. Another Journalist, Alcibiades Gonzalez Delvalle, secretary General of the Journalists Guild of Paraguay, was subjected to a search of his home. Police looked for copies of a book he authored, My Vote for the People, IAPA stated. Earlier this year, police took 270 copies of the book. Between December 26, 1984 and January 2, 1985, the Government suspended and later permanently closed the magazine, Aqui. It was the oldest magazine in the nation in its 14th year with circulation of 25,000. The magazine covered mainly police stories and closing was ordered after the attorney General argued the magazine's reporters were morbid and deranged and

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that the magazine offended morality and good customs. An appeal in late January 1985 failed to reopen the magazine.

PERU--- The Peruvian Collegium of Journalists does not require membership, but all news media must contribute one percent of their advertising income for support. Pluralism characterizes the media content in Peru today under a democratic government. All political views are represented in the news media in one for or another. Taxes on newsprint, like in other South American countries, have increased (from five percent to twenty-seven percent; with delivery costs, the rise is thirty-eight percent). Legislation was underway during fall 1984 which would require foreign correspondents to register with the police when working in Peru. Accreditation will be necessary as well. This is still pending in spring 1985. In March 1985, in Huanta, Ayacucho, journalist Fredy Mauro Valladares was killed by a Civil Guard following an argument; the case against the Guard is pending.

PUERTO RICO--- Complete freedom of the press and information remains in Puerto Rico.

SURINAME--- There is no freedom of the press. Four newsmen were killed in a December 1982 massacre in Suriname when the offices of the newspaper De Vrije Stem and ABC radio were bombed and burned down by government forces. The government also forced several reporters to leave the country after threats were made; they are presently living in exile. Detention of foreign journalists has also occurred, the report noted. IPI noted the last vestige of press freedom ended in 1983 in the government's campaign against press freedom. Facilities for newspapers were destroyed and publications closed.

URUGUAY--- There have been numerous changes in Uruguay in the past few months, many of them directly related to the change of governments there.

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Among the first steps of the new democratic Government was an effort to revoke and correct all rules and regulations restricting freedom of the press and the right of the public to access to information, IAPA stated. President Dr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti issued a draft of a law modifying the restrictive press legislation in Uruguay on the day of his inauguration. The old law is no longer enforced, IAPA reported. The Government also revoked the requirement that foreign correspondents provide copies of their stories to the Interior Ministry. Censorship of foreign publications was lifted and 27 publications that had been closed since 1973 were allowed to reopen. The National Public Relations Directorate, which provided propaganda for the Government and persecuted journalists through accreditation powers, was dissolved as well. The new Government has created a Secretariat of Information which will work to assist the news media. At present, all that is necessary for journalists' accreditation is a letter of authorization from the news organization. Official advertising, once assigned for political loyalty, is now provided in all media without distinction. Finally, IAPA reported, Uruguay has no obligatory licensing of journalists.

VENEZUELA--- The law which requires membership in the college of journalists to practice journalism is still in effect. IPI believes the conditions in Venezuela continue to worsen. Increased arrests and court actions against newsmen and publishers have occurred. At the end of 1984, the editorial commentary from the Camara de Radiodifusion, a daily program transmitted by almost all broadcasting stations in the country, was suspended.

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CONCLUSIONS

The status of freedom of the press and freedom of information in Latin America and the Caribbean is improving. In the spring 1985 committee report from Panama City, IAPA said:

> . . . (F)or the first time in many years, it is possible to begin an Inter American Press Association mid-year review of the state of press freedom in the Americas with unalloyed good news. On the very day of his inauguration, President Julio Maria Sanguinetti marked the return to constitutional government in Uruguay after 12 years of military dictatorship by sending a draft law to Congress lifting all restrictions on press freedom. Twenty-seven banned publications, closed since 1973, may reopen and restrictions on foreign correspondents and the censorship of foreign publications has been lifted (36).

However, this shows how quickly things have changed in at least one country in Latin America and the Caribbean. Just a year and a half ago, the IAPA General Assembly said "a depressing and sometimes alarming story of a free press under attack from all directions emerged from the reports . . . (of the Freedom of the Press and Information Committee)" (37). The trend restricting freedom of the press and information seems to be unchanged in some places--- there still is substantial harassment, imprisonment, expulsion, violence, censorship, and conspiracy to restrict the flow of news. Increasing costs are becoming a more serious problem in Latin American and Caribbean countries as well.

As in Uruguay, there are certain bright spots. Elected governments in several countries have replaced military dictatorships and there is more press freedom in nations such as Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia as a result. Brazil is moving in that direction. And with democracy restored in Granada, a free press functions on that island today.

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Concern for Latin American news media seems to be growing parallel to the importance of the region in world affairs in this decade. In June 1987, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and the Newspaper Guild issued what they hope will be the first of a series of annual reports on press freedom throughout Latin America, with the hope of creating more attention to the professional status of Latin American journalists (38). On at least one occasion, South American governments have shown growing interest in a free press by hosting American journalists and scholars to discuss media responsibility and performance in democratic governments (39).

The hope in 1985 that the American continents--- including the Caribbean--- could show a better freedom of the press situation is endorsed by a few but important changes:

* return of democracy in Argentina.

* end of total censorship in Uruguay.

* maintenance of democracy in the three traditional democratic countries: Venezuela, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

We conclude, unfortunately, there is still a long way to go before the continent becomes fully free in terms of expression and government harassment of independent news media. But there are some good signs in the middle of the fray, and we are encouraged. We see each step forward as a victory in the war for this free speech cause.

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TABLE 1

FALL 1984 IAPA RESOLUTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Country	Topic
Chile	Urges the government to reverse restrictions on publications of news and photographs of anti-government activities; urges lifting of prior censorship.
Costa Rica	Concerned with Stephen Schmidt case and his three-month suspended sentence; urges Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to recognize the importance of the case in the context of licensing.
Cuba	Urges members to report the Cuban situation and to work with international organizations to obtain freedom of Cuban journalists who are in prison.
Dominican Republic	Condemns Dominican Journalists Collegium procedure against newspapers that are challenging constitutionality of the Dominican licensing law in the courts and declares these steps show the DJC has become an instrument of pressure against the independent press.
Guyana	Asks IAPA president to designate an observer to attend and monitor the court hearing in Guyana of Rev. Andrew Morrison of The Catholic Standard for libel.
Nicaragua	Urges the end of prior censorship and establishment of unrestricted freedom of the press as promised by the law.
Panama	Asks IAPA president to establish a commission to visit Panama to ask president to return confiscated newspapers and radio stations to their owners, to pay damages, and to restore freedom of expression in Panama.
Paraguay	Asks president to allow ABC Color to resume publication; asks democratic governments to lobby the Paraguay government for freedom of the press and information.
United States	States that any governmental attempt at licensing is a threat to freedom of information and any effort to license individuals such as Robert Rutka is inconsistent to established policy; IAPA remains strongly opposed to licensing of journalists.
Uruguay	Asks the government to solve the existing document problems that affect newsmen and to report on those cases in which professional journalists have judicial or police charges against them.

Source: Report of resolutions adopted by 40th General Assembly of the Inter American Press Association in Los Angeles, October 1984.

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TABLE 2

SPRING 1985 IAPA RESOLUTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Country	Topic
Argentina	Again petitions Government to eliminate 39% duty on imported newsprint.
Brazil	Asks the president of Brazil to eliminate the press law since no democracy should have any law that restricts press freedom.
Chile	Repeats its past call for an end to the various states states of exception in Chile and an end to the bans and restrictions on Chilean media.
Colombia	Urges President Betancur to introduce legislation at the current extraordinary session of Congress to fulfill his promise to IAPA to remove the eight percent duty.
Cuba	Condemns the Government of Cuba for isolating its people from outside information.
Nicaragua	Repeats its request that the Government of Nicaragua lift censorship of the press and all other restrictions of freedom of the press and expression in accordance with the promise in Nicaragua's Fundamental Statute of Rights and Guarantees.
Panama	Asks the president to reopen the case of the confiscated publications with a view of returning its newspapers and radio station to its legitimate owner, Editora Panama America, and La Voz de Colon and Radio Impacto to its owners; requests the Government of Panama to pay compensation to La Prensa; condemns Law #11 as a serious threat to press freedom and to request the constitutional Government of Panama to abrogate it.
Paraguay	Urges President Stroessner immediately end brutal, arbitrary actions against the press in General and democracy and especially to allow the reopening of ABC Color.

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TABLE 2 CONTINUED

SPRING 1985 IAPA RESOLUTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Country	Topic
United States	Strongly opposes any practice which allows government agents to masquerade as journalists or to infiltrate any newspaper, broadcast medium, or press organization; urges the president of U.S. to prohibit any employee or agent of the government from posing as a journalist in carrying out government policy.
Official Advertising	Condemns discrimination in the placement of official advertisements as undemocratic and a violation of press freedom. Requests governments such as those in El Salvador, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic to end official advertising discrimination against the independent press, which seriously affects the press freedom guaranteed by their constitutions.

Source: Report of resolutions adopted by the Board of Directors of the Inter American Press Association during the mid-year meeting in Panama City, Panama, March 10-14, 1985.

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1. "Noted Columnist Weekly Editor Slain in Mexico," IAPA News, No. 295, August 1984, p. 9. For more information on similar violence against journalists in 1984, see "Free Press Under Fire in 1984: Killings, Kidnappings, Threats," Presstime, February, 1985, 7:2, pp. 32-33.

2. "The Pain of Reporting the Death of Colleagues," IAPA News, No. 295, August 1984, p. 8.

3. Sam Dillon, "Salvadoran Gunmen Kill Right-Wing Journalist," The Miami Herald, April 2, 1984.

4. Associated Press, "U.S. Journalist Slain in El Salvador Gunfire," The Miami News, March 17, 1984, p. 14a.

5. Marcia Fram, "Nineteen Journalists Slain in 1983 Attacks," Presstime, February 1984, 6:2, p. 7.

6. P.J. Tichenor, G.A. Donohue, and C.N. Olien, "Mass Media Functions, Knowledge, and Social Control," Journalism Quarterly, 50:652-59 (Winter 1973).

7. Amde-Michael Habte, "The Mass Media Role in the Third World," in L. John Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary, eds., Comparative Mass Media Systems (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 107.

8. Peter Galliner, "World Press Freedom Review," IPI Report, 32:12 (December 1983), p. 1. Taking such situations quite seriously, the Inter American Press Association has produced a brochure for journalists working in dangerous areas. The brochure, "Surviving Dangerous Assignments," is available by request from the IAPA headquarters, 2911 NW 39th St., Miami, FL 33142.

9. Federico Massot, "The News Media in Argentina." Address before students and faculty, School of Communication at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla., February 2, 1984.

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10. Manuel Jimenez B., "Press Without the First Amendment," Region 3 conference of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, Konover Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, April 7, 1984.

11. Fram, op. cit.

12. Kuldip R. Rampal, " . . . In the Third World," in L. John Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary, eds., Comparative Mass Media Systems (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 163.

13. Charles A. Perlik, Jr., "Introduction," in Council on Hemispheric Affairs and The Newspaper Guild, "A Survey of Press Freedom in Latin America" (Washington, D.C.: Council on Hemispheric Affairs, June 1983), p. 1.

14. Marvin Alisky, Latin American Media: Guidance and Censorship (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1981), pp. 19-20.

15. Sunwoo Nam, "Press Freedom in the Third World," in L. John Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary, eds., Comparative Mass Media Systems (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 310.

16. "Ornes Warns of Dangers," IAPA Updates, March 1, 1979, p. 2.

17. For example, see Alisky, op cit. See also Robert N. Pierce, Keeping the Flame, Hastings House, New York, 1979 and see also John Merrill, Global Journalism, Longman, New York, 1983. Finally, see L. John Martin and Anju Chaudhary, eds., Comparative Mass Media Systems, Longman, 1983.

18. The authors use reports on violence against journalists, freedom of press, and freedom of information from the Inter American Press Association 40th General Assembly at Los Angeles in October 1984 and the mid-year meeting in Panama City, Panama in March 1985. IAPA has membership from newspapers and news services in North, South, and Central America and the Caribbean. It has been a major press freedom watchdog organization in this hemisphere for the last half century.

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19. Reports cited are the International Press Institute's IPI Report, the Index on Censorship, and the Committee to Protect Journalists' CPJ Update.

20. "Conclusions," Inter American Press Association XL General Assembly, Los Angeles, California, approved November 1, 1984.

21. See "Report on the Committee of Freedom of the Press and Information," unpublished report prepared for members of the Inter American Press Association, 40th General Assembly, Los Angeles, October 1984 and see unpublished report on the mid-year meeting, Inter American Press Association, Panama City, March 1985.

22. See "World Press Freedom Review," IPI Report, 32:12 (December 1983), pp. 7-12, 14-17, 24.

23. "Index," Index on Censorship, 12:6 (December 1983), pp. 43-48.

24. "Caselist," CPJ Update, No. 10 (January-February 1984), pp. 4-8.

25. For more on Argentina, see Mario Szichman, "The SOUTHERN CONE: 'Change' in Argentina," CPJ Update, No. 12 (May/June 1984), pp. 1-4.

26. A new development jeopardizing freedom of the press in Bolivia is a licensing proposal recently submitted for approval by the government. The proposal suggests licensing at two levels--- (1) reporters and (2) editors and publishers. The proposal also would require that newspapers other than those which the licensed journalist works for must publish that licensed journalist's columns on its editorial page. Licensing has always been considered a serious threat facing journalists, a situation which is fundamentally contrary to the guarantees of freedom of the press in most constitutions. A number of scholars (including John Merrill in The Imperative of Freedom, Hastings House, New York, 1974), have argued there should be no minimum entrance requirements for journalism.

27. "World Press Freedom Review," IPI Report, 32:12 (December 1983), p. 8.

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28. For more information on the Schmidt case, see "Obligatory Licensing: A Threat to Press Freedom: The Stephen Schmidt Case," published by The Tico Times, S.A., P.O. Box 4632, San Jose, Costa Rica, 1983. See also Richard Dyer, "Setback for Press in Costa Rica," CPJ Update, No. 10 (January-February 1984), p. 4.

29. For more information on the Dominican Republic, see Gary Stix, "Press Hit by Harsh Response to Dominican Riots," CPJ Update, No. 12 (May/June 1984), pp. 3-4.

30. Jean-Marie Simon, "Guatemalan Press Still Under Fire," CPJ Update, No. 11 (March/April 1984), pp. 1-2.

31. "Press Freedom Flowers Briefly in Haiti," CPJ Update, No. 13 (July/August 1984), p. 3.

32. Raymundo Riva Palacio, "Wave of Violence Hits Mexican Press," CPJ Update, No. 13 (July/August 1984), p. 2.

33. The Miami Herald, "Managua Police Seize Newspapers," August 31, 1984, p. 6A. For background on the current status of La Prensa, see Guillermo Martinez, "'La Prensa' vs. the Sandinista Censors," The Miami Herald, March 25, 1984.

34. "World Press Freedom Review," p. 17.

35. "PARAGUAY: ABC Color Shut Down," CPJ Update, No. 12 (May/June 1984), p. 5.

36. "Conclusions." Unpublished report prepared by the Inter American Press Association, 43th General Assembly, Los Angeles, November 1, 1934.

37. "Conclusions." Unpublished report prepared by the Inter American Press Association, 39th General Assembly, Lima, Peru, October 28, 1983.

38. Perlik, op. cit.

39. For example, in November and December 1983, the city of Cali, Colombia hosted journalists and media scholars from Florida and Louisiana to speak on

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media responsibility toward the community. They also discussed ways Colombian journalists can improve their work and suggested methods to enhance access to information.

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